

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of preventing financial fraud concerning a financial instrument, comprising the steps of:
  - 5 a) receiving from a first source identifying information concerning the financial instrument;
  - b) storing the identifying information into a financial instrument database;
  - c) receiving information from a second source regarding the financial  
10 instrument;
  - d) comparing the information from the second source with the identifying information concerning the financial instrument stored in the financial instrument database; and
  - e) honoring the financial instrument if the information from the second  
15 source matches the identifying information concerning the financial instrument stored in the financial instrument database.
2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising dishonoring the financial instrument if  
20 the information from the second source does not match the identifying information concerning the financial instrument stored in the financial instrument database.

3. A system for preventing financial fraud concerning a financial instrument, said system comprising:

a first device;

a second device; and

5 a server, said server including a program module for storing a financial instrument database, and further comprising a program module operative to:

a) receive from a first source identifying information concerning the financial instrument;

10 b) storing the identifying information into a financial instrument database;

c) receive information from a second source regarding the financial instrument;

15 d) compare the information from the second source with the identifying information concerning the financial instrument stored in the financial instrument database; and

e) honor the financial instrument if the information from the second source matches the identifying information concerning the financial instrument stored in the financial instrument database.

20 4. The system of Claim 3, wherein said first device comprises a telecommunications link to said server from a financial institution.

5. The system of Claim 4, wherein said second device comprises a telecommunications link to said server from a financial institution.

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6. An apparatus for preventing financial fraud with financial instruments, the apparatus comprising:

- a) a stored data base;
- b) a memory device for containing a program module;
- 5 c) an user interface; and
- e) a processing unit coupled to the memory device, the data object and the user interface, the processing unit being operative in response to the instructions of the program module to:
  - 10 receive from a first source identifying information concerning the financial instrument;
  - store the identifying information into a financial instrument database;
  - receive information from a second source regarding the financial instrument;
  - 15 compare the information from the second source with the identifying information concerning the financial instrument stored in the financial instrument database; and
  - honor the financial instrument if the information from the second source matches the identifying information concerning the financial instrument stored in the financial instrument database.
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7. The apparatus of Claim 6, wherein said apparatus is as stand-alone system.

8. The apparatus of Claim 6, wherein said apparatus is a server connected to a telecommunications network.

9. The apparatus of Claim 6, wherein the stored database comprises a financial instrument database.